

Câmpina YOUTh Art Festival

Name of the organisation

GEYC

Website of the organisation

www.geyc.ro

Location of the organisation

Strada Sfântul Elefterie 31, București, 050524 Bucharest, Romania

E-mail address of the organisation

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Good practice aspect(s)/themes of youth work

- Participation of young people in implementing youth activities (planning, preparing, carrying out, etc.)
- Participation of young people in decision making
- Arts and culture
- Non-formal education/-learning

Good practice category

A practice of processes and methods

Good practice aim & purpose

The YOUTh Art Festival (YAF) aimed to address a critical set of needs expressed by the youth of a post-industrial city in Romania called Câmpina. The primary identified challenge was a lack of international context, which limited young people's perspectives, as well as their ability to practice skills, engage with European culture, and get involved in activities designed for them. This fostered a sense of disengagement and low involvement in the local community.

The objectives of the YAF have been to:

#1 – Foster European Identity and Connectivity: To make the youth feel “more European” by providing a vibrant intercultural context, which included involving 42 international volunteers from 19 countries.

#2 – Promote EU Values and Democracy: To systematically advocate for values like democracy, human dignity, equality, and freedom through specific, dedicated non-formal education activities (e.g., the Intercultural Picnic, “Tinerii Merită,” dedicated EU stands, etc.).

#3 – Rejuvenate Local Community: To structurally increase youth involvement by leading collaborative processes that resulted in the co-creation of the Local Youth Strategy, the City-Vision Design process, and the STEAM Education Panel. This aimed to empower the local community to direct the city's future efforts toward a more welcoming space for young people.

Good practice description

The YOUTH Art Festival (YAF) is a multi-year youth engagement program developed after a Protocol of Collaboration signed in 2021 with the local Mayor's Office. Most of the related activities have been implemented primarily under the European Solidarity Corps (ESC) framework.

YAF is characterised by its peer-to-peer approach and transnational volunteer model, recruiting and funding 42 international ESC volunteers from 19 countries over 3 editions. These volunteers have served as the designers and facilitators of the activities, every element (from the YAF mascot to each of the core activities) being developed by young people showcasing their unique skills & talents (e.g., Escape Rooms, treasure hunts, pottery, etc.).

This practice incorporates two key methodologies for bottom-up community engagement:

Consultative Process: The festival and all included activities stem from feedback from local youth. This practice led to the co-creation of the Local Youth Strategy (through a public consultation process), which provided a long-term strategic direction for the city's youth development efforts. It also led to the creation of the city-vision co-design and the STEAM education panel, as well as all of the included stands and activities that were part of the festival.

Peer-to-peer non-formal education: All the activities that were part of the festival agenda were developed and led by the international ESC volunteers. This approach ensured that non-formal education was highly engaging and deeply relevant for the beneficiaries, providing a more inclusive environment for the local community.

The festival agenda was designed to be diverse, blending fun, culture, civic engagement and non-formal education. It included activities like Escape Rooms & Treasure Hunts (integrating the cultural heritage & STEAM Education), Creative Workshops (such as painting, origami, jewellery making, pottery, etc.), and STEAM workshops designed to develop practical and cooperative skills. The festival also aimed to deeply integrate with the local community, including over 20 local organisations from the local community.

The festival aimed to tackle intercultural exposure, aiming to promote EU values and to broaden the perspectives of the local community. To do this, we have organised a varied series of activities, including Intercultural Picnics with local community members, study visits for local community immersion, systemic dissemination in all of the high schools in the city in over 100 classes, interactive games and trivia at dedicated EU stands, street interviews through "Tinerii Merită", and much more.

By integrating international volunteers into all stages—from design to implementation—the YAF creates a self-sustaining model for local rejuvenation and European connection.

Good practice result & concrete effects

The YOUTH Art Festival (YAF) generated a cascade of measurable civic and social effects. We organized 3 Festival Editions & 3 Public Consultations, and the project mobilized 600+ Festival Participants & involved 20+ Organizations.

During YAF we provided youth a structural voice in democracy, developing the city's first Local Youth Strategy, we organized a city-vision design workshop, as well as the STEAM Education Panel, organized over 30+ Festival Activities, with dissemination in 100+ high school classrooms.

This initiative boosted interaction with international peers, led to a tangible shift towards transnational engagement, with local participants joining future ESC mission, or Erasmus+ projects abroad. The initiative achieved high visibility through multiple media appearances, including local news stations, radio stations, and online news channels, confirming its role as a powerful, proven model for local rejuvenation and European connectivity. Most importantly, the festival instilled “hope” in the hearts of the local youth.

This activity culminated in winning the Charlemagne Youth Award at the Romanian level.

Good practice chapter of the European Charter on Local Youth Work

Core principles of youth work